

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

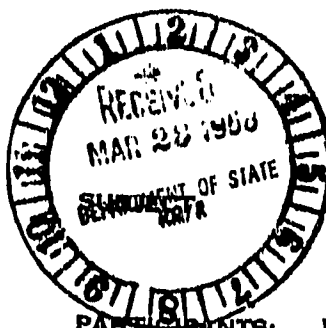
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Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE:
March 25, 1958



M-1099

UK's plan for European Security

MAR 30 1958

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PARTICIPANTS: Viscount Hood, Minister, and Mr. Jackling, Counselor, British Embassy;
Mr. Elbrick - EUR
Mr. McBride - RA
Mr. Freers - EE
Mr. Toon - EE

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Viscount Hood said the purpose of his call was to carry forward the substantive discussions of issues which might be agenda topics at a possible Summit conference which had been initiated by the Secretary with Ambassador Caccia.

Disarmament

Hood referred briefly to the Secretary's conversation with Ambassador Caccia on March 24 at which the Secretary expressed his view that certain elements of the Western disarmament package of August 29, 1957 might be considered separately in negotiations with the Soviets and that among these were measures to guard against surprise attack. A possible approach in this field would be to recommend an inspection zone extending from a line running east of Paris to a line running west of Minsk. Viscount Hood said that the British are now considering the possibility of extending this inspection zone to outlying areas, such as the Arctic.

Outer Space

Hood said that it was his understanding that the Secretary had in mind the possibility of reaching an agreement with the Soviets simply to study the problem of outer space controls. Since it was apparently the Secretary's intention that such a study would encompass controls of both ICBMs and IREMs the British would be obliged to review their entire defense posture before giving their agreement. The Secretary had expressed the view to Ambassador Caccia that it would be possible to have effective control over missiles through aerial inspection of launching sites; Hood wondered if this would be possible with regard to solid fuel missiles as well as liquid fuel missiles.

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In any event Hood felt that the British and American military elements should discuss this entire problem as soon as possible. Mr. Elbrick agreed that military discussions would be required but pointed out that JCS studies on the problem are not yet completed.

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Test Suspension

Hood referred to previous statements by the Secretary as to the possibility of a 2-3 year suspension of nuclear tests in the course of which agreement on cessation of reproduction of fissionable material for military purposes would be sought. He asked if the US had reached a decision on this question. Mr. Elbrick replied that the working level people in the Department had made recommendations in this field to the Secretary but that a final US position on test suspension must await a policy review by the Secretary in consultation with McElroy of Defense and Straus of the Atomic Energy Commission.

McMahon Act

Hood referred again to the Secretary's conversation with Ambassador Caccia on March 24 and particularly the view expressed by the Secretary that it would be desirable now to draft an agreement for the transfer of certain nuclear materials from the US to the UK, in anticipation of the required amendments to the McMahon Act. Mr. Elbrick said that he would consult with Mr. Farley on this problem as soon as possible but agreed with Hood's suggestion that the US should have the responsibility for preparing such a draft.

European Security

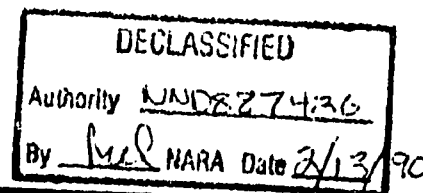
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Hood said that his government believed the Western powers must be prepared to put forward in any future negotiations with the Soviets a plan for European security. Such a plan he felt should be relatively simple and easily understandable and appealing to public opinion. The UK had developed a plan which it believed met these criteria and would now like to submit it for consideration by the US (text attached).

In the UK's view there are four principal reasons why the West should be prepared to put forward its own plan for European security:

- 1) The Soviet Government's professed desire to reach agreement should be put to the test. The West cannot do this without a plan of its own.
- 2) It would be to the West's advantage to go to any meeting with the Soviet Union with new ideas, but the area is limited in which such new ideas are practicable.
- 3) In view of the wide variety of proposals for "disengagement" in Europe that are already current, it seems unlikely that the whole

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question will be dropped or that, if the Soviet Union put forward again one of their plans, it will be possible for the West to return a blank refusal on purely military grounds.

4) If a meeting of Heads of Government failed, the Soviet Government must be seen to bear the blame. The Western plan should therefore be one sufficiently simple to be readily understood by public opinion, reasonable on its face, yet imaginative in content, and at the same time containing the safeguards essential to the Western position.

In the UK's view the following are the principal disadvantages to the attached plan:

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1) Any withdrawal of Soviet and allied forces from their present positions in Germany might increase the risk of a general war as a result of miscalculation and might encourage the Soviet Union to embark on probing attacks to test the strength of the allied will to resist. The consequences of military action might be less apparent than at present, when there is a firm and unblurred line between the forces of East and West. If such attacks were not met with force, the whole alliance might be undermined.

2) There might be increased danger of adventures on the part of either West or East German troops, because the restraint exercised by the physical presence of large Soviet forces would be diminished. Moreover, should there be disorders in the zone concerned, Soviet forces might be tempted to violate the agreement in order to suppress them.

3) In view of the military risks involved, as well as for logistic and training reasons, any Western proposals of this nature must be of limited scope and area. Thus they might appear to be only a watered-down version of Soviet proposals adapted to create disadvantages to the Soviet Government greater than those to the West. Moreover, the Soviet Government might take the proposals as merely an opening bid, and make counter-proposals which would be dangerous to the West but which we might find it difficult to reject outright.

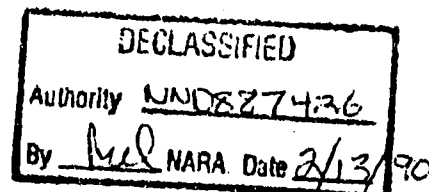
4) The necessary redeployment of United States and United Kingdom forces might be taken as the first step towards further withdrawals.

Its disadvantages cited above, however, must be weighed against the following considerations:

1) The West need not be too tender with the Soviet Government. We can leave it to them to estimate the disadvantages. The fact

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that they would have to redeploy more troops than the West arises because they have chosen to keep more troops in the area than the West has.

2) The smaller the zone of "disengagement", the smaller is the military risk. The area now suggested is small judged as a military area in modern terms, but on both sides of the present border it would be large enough to be of genuine significance. Moreover, "disengagement" is in any case not a new element in Western policy, e.g. Point 3 in the Draft Outline Security Treaty put forward at Geneva in October 1955, and the Western undertaking in the Berlin Declaration of 1956 not to "take military advantage" from German reunification, which implies the demilitarisation of what is now the Eastern zone of Germany.

3) The opposing German forces have stronger reasons, which would remain valid, for avoiding conflict than the mere presence among them of Soviet or other Western troops. The German troops, eastern and western, would in any case remain subject to NATO and Warsaw Pact command and control.

4) The West would have to stand firmly on their initial proposal, making it clear that the Western boundary of the zone was not negotiable. The only way for the Soviet Government to go further in the direction of extending the zone would be for them to discuss and come to an agreement with the West on German reunification.

Finally the UK sees the following intrinsic advantages to its plan:

1) The present plan, which is to be regarded as a package, maintains a link with German reunification and thus meets one of the principal German anxieties. It might also be welcome in some respects to opinion in Poland and the other satellites.

2) Even if only the first stage in fact went into operation, the West would have gained a limited Soviet withdrawal, a small de-nuclearised area, pilot controls in that area and measures against surprise attack in Europe.

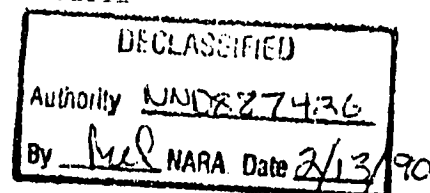
3) It would seem to be a contribution to the relaxation of East-West tension.

In concluding his presentation Viscount Hood said his Government would welcome the views of the US Government on:

1) whether any form of disengagement should be contemplated outside the context of a general political settlement in Europe;

2) if so, whether the attached plan represents the maximum measure of disengagement that would be safe and practicable.

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After briefly reviewing the attached plan Mr. Elbrick expressed the following preliminary reactions. In the first place an analysis of the plan by our military people would be required. Meanwhile, it should be understood that a withdrawal of nuclear weapons as set forth in agreement no. 3 of the plan would probably mean withdrawal of troops since the Defense Department feels strongly that American armed forces must be equipped with the most modern weapons if they are to be effective. Secondly, withdrawal of troops from Germany would pose the critical problem of where such troops should be located; the Department of Defense, for example, has expressed the preliminary view that for practical and political reasons Germany is probably the only area in Europe where American military forces could be stationed. If this is the case then we should consider what would be the ultimate fate of NATO as a defense organization if the British plan should be implemented.

Hood said that his Government would take no action on the attached plan until receipt of the US views. The UK would be reluctant to table its plan in the North Atlantic Council even with the approval of the US because of the possible suspicion such action might engender as to the ultimate intention of the UK to withdraw its forces from Europe. A more desirable procedure from the British point of view would be to attempt to focus discussion in the European Security Subcommittee of NATO on the British plan.

Next Steps with the Soviets

Hood pointed out that he assumed that questions of composition, agenda and site would now arise in the North Atlantic Council after presentation of the British draft statement which had been discussed by Ambassador Caccia with the Secretary over the weekend. The Secretary had informed Caccia that it would be necessary soon to establish positions on these questions and seek a clarification of them with the Soviets. Hood now asked as to the US view on how and where this clarification might be sought - in the first round of diplomatic talks, by a secret approach to the Soviets, through Secretary General Hammarsjold.

Mr. Elbrick said that he thought such clarification should be sought in the first round of diplomatic talks. As to where these should take place, no decision had been reached.

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